

PROPOSED ACCEPTANCE OF THE SPECIFIC NAME "AUSTRALIS" KERR, 1792, AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION "CANIS AUSTRALIS" AS THE NAME FOR THE FALKLAND ISLANDS WOLF

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At the time when he proposed that the Commission should use its Plenary Powers to suppress the name *antarcticus* Kerr, 1792, as published in the combination *Canis antarcticus*, in order to preserve for the Dingo of Australia the well-known name *dingo* Meyer, 1793, as published in the combination *Canis dingo* (File Z.N.(S.) 487)³, the late Dr. G. H. H. Tate (*The American Museum of Natural History, New York*) suggested also that the Commission should consider whether it was desirable in the interests of stability in nomenclature to suppress another specific name published by Kerr which had long been ignored but which had been found to be older than the name which had for many years been in use for the species in question.

2. The name referred to by Dr. Tate was the name *australis* Kerr, 1792 (*Anim. Kingd. zool. Syst. Linnaeus* : 144), as published in the combination *Canis australis*. This name applies to, and is the oldest available name for, the Falkland Islands Wolf. For a hundred and thirty years, however, this name was completely overlooked, the Falkland Islands Wolf being known by the name *antarcticus* Bechstein, 1799 (Pennant's *Uebers. vierfüssige Thiere* 1 : 271) as published in the combination *Canis antarcticus*.

3. The identity of the species represented by the two foregoing nominal species was established by Cabrera in 1931 (*J. Mammal.* 12 : 66). In the light of current zoological sentiment against the upsetting of long-established names by the resurrection of ancient names which have long been consigned to oblivion, it is unfortunate, as Dr. Tate pointed out, that an application was not made to the Commission for the suppression of the name *australis* Kerr immediately it was discovered that it antedated the established name *antarcticus* Bechstein. Now that twenty-five years have elapsed since the re-appearance of the name *australis* Kerr, it is necessary to consider whether that name has during that period established itself sufficiently to make it unnecessary at this stage to attempt to save the name *antarcticus* Bechstein.

4. Shortly before his death Dr. Tate informed me that he had come to the conclusion that it was now too late to prevent the disappearance in synonymy of the name *antarcticus* Bechstein. The same view has been expressed by

³ See p. 121 of the present volume.

Dr. T. C. S. Morrison-Scott (*British Museum (Natural History), London*), whom I recently consulted on this subject. In his letter (dated 4th January 1955) Dr. Morrison-Scott noted that there was only one recent work on the mammals of South America as a whole; this is the work entitled *Mamíferos Sud-Americanos* by Cabrera & Yepes published in 1940, in which work the name *australis* Kerr was used for the Falkland Islands Wolf.

5. In view of the fact that this question was raised with the Commission by Dr. Tate, it seems desirable that a decision should now be taken on it. Having regard to the evidence summarised above it appears that the general feeling is that in view of the march of time the best course will be to accept the change of name made in this case. Accordingly, if this is found to be the general view, I recommend that the Commission should close this case by placing the specific name *australis* Kerr, 1792, as published in the combination *Canis australis*, on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology*.